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UNH Prepares for Semester Opening

This year features a new volunteer program for incoming students

By [Kim Billings](#)
UNH News Bureau
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DURHAM, N.H. , Saturday, Aug. 31, marks the beginning of the fall semester at the University of New Hampshire, when more than 2,700 new students arrive in Durham.

Residence halls open for first-year students in the morning, with activities planned throughout the weekend, including a First-Year Convocation and Welcome Ceremony, featuring UNH's new president, Ann Weaver Hart. Also scheduled is the the annual class picture and a barbeque just for first-year students. For a complete schedule, visit the Web site <http://www.unh.edu/orientation/>.

New program focuses on public service

Thirty first-year students will begin their college career at the university a week before their classmates, as part of a new service education program called ProVES , Pre-Orientation Volunteer Experience in Service.

The First-Year Programs Office teamed up with the Partnership for Social Action to create this initiative, designed to introduce community service and leadership to first-year students.

Participants will live on campus during the program and spend the week at area non-profit agencies providing public service as diverse as reconstructing a French drain at the John Paul Jones House in Portsmouth to hosting an activities day for the adult day care program, a part of Strafford Area Homemakers. Other public

service programs are slated at the Portsmouth Children's Museum and the Seacoast YMCA's Camp Gundalow in Greenland.

Participants will work in teams of five, led by two upperclass team leaders and take part in a day-long leadership and team-building session at UNH's Browne Center. For the remainder of the week, teams will visit a different site each day to ensure a range of experiences. Evening adventures include a movie and games night, a sightseeing trip to historic Portsmouth and other group activities.

According to Marianne Fortescue and Judy Spiller, who designed and are coordinating the new program, most first-year students arrive at college with volunteer and public service experience.

"This program," says Spiller, "allows students to become a part of the UNH community and the larger community by helping others."

Classes at UNH start Tuesday, Sept. 3.

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